

Amat. ent. Soc., 36:74-78) make no mention of any green larvae, and this accords with my own breeding experience in both India and East Africa.

A larva reared by itself, with a plentiful supply of food, will very occasionally remain green in the last instar, but the vast majority, particularly when reared in batches, are of the dark form. Possibly disturbance, and consequent movement, encourages the production of melanin, analogous to the dark hoppers of the gregarious phase of locusts, aided perhaps by insufficient light. The dark larvae are very variable and good coloured figures of some of the forms are given in Bell & Scott, *Fauna of British India, Moths (Sphingidae)*, v, pl. ix. — D. G. SEVASTOPULO, F.R.E.S., P.O. Box 95026, Mombasa, Kenya.

A NOTE FROM THE U.S.A. — The "Letters to the Editor" in the December number of *The Record* seem to indicate that the same issues are being discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. Collecting with a light by individuals is frowned on in our parks, whereas Government agencies set up poison-baited traps as a matter of course. I maintain that individuals who earn a salary for research in entomology are just as much professionals as the commercial breeder.

To be specific, however, I wish to reply to Mr. Pratt's article, "A Case Against the Automobile". It is of course fashionable to complain about the automobile in this day and age. From personal observation, it would appear that Expressway medians and fringes, far from being an entomological wasteland, are most productive areas. In a survey by Robert Priest and myself, over 500 *Hyalophora cecropia* cocoons were counted on a quarter mile of highway median. *Callosamia promethia* cocoons can often be seen on Expressway medians in rural areas. These two species are large and slow flying, and would appear especially vulnerable to death by high speed traffic, whereas the lighter, smaller species would stand a chance of being deflected by the wind of a passing car.

The change of habitat caused by roads in rural areas could be expected to be beneficial, as wooded fringes are established. One would also expect that predators and parasites fall victims to cars. The death of one sparrow, for example, might "save" a hundred moths.

I would suggest therefore that, in this case as in so many others, the automobile is not quite the villain it is made out to be. — CHRIS A. YOUNG, 20476 Kinloch, Redford Twp., Michigan 48240.

COMMUNAL MELANCHRA PERSICARIAE L. LARVAE. — Until recently I had never encountered the larvae of *Melanchra persicariae* L. (Dot moth) other than singly, being under the impression that the ovipositing female laid her eggs only in ones or twos on widely separate foodplants. On 5th October, 1977, however, my father and I found 22 larvae on one of his gooseberry bushes. One or two further larvae were on another bush about a foot or so distant. All were almost full-fed, and

all except one were of the usual pale green colour with darker shadings, the odd-man-out being pale brown with darker brown markings. They were far from conspicuous, despite their size, crowding into such a small area; indeed my father would not have noticed them had I not pointed them out to him. Needless to say, the larvae met the fate of all insects which dare to consume the gardener's produce! — ANTHONY WOOTTON, 40 Roundhill, Stone, Near Aylesbury, Bucks., HP17 8RD.

A NEW WEST KENT LOCALITY FOR DIGITIVALVA (=ACROLEPIA) PERLEPIDELLA STT. — On 29th May, 1969, while collecting in a large old chalkpit at Swanscombe, N.W. Kent, I captured by general sweeping a "micro" quite uncommon to me. It was put aside and more or less neglected until an opportunity occurred lately of showing it to Mr. J. M. Chalmers-Hunt, who recognised it as the above very local and scarce Plutellid—a species with which he was well acquainted. On none of my several visits to the pit had I ever seen the foodplant, *Inula conyza* DC, nor anywhere in the vicinity; however, it must surely have been present, as all evidence suggests that this moth is not a wanderer. Probably the plant is very restricted there.

The locality is of interest in being not far from Darenth Wood, whence Stainton, the describer of *perlepidella*, recorded one in 1854, but where, apparently, it was never recaptured. Very few other localities are known, namely the Bristol area (formerly); Rodborough, Glos.; and—a recent discovery—Trottscliffe, Kent (see Chalmers-Hunt, 1969, *Ent. Rec.*, **81**: 187-9, for an excellent account of the species). It is hard to understand why *D. perlepidella* should not occur on the North Downs in Surrey, where *I. conyza* is locally plentiful. — A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London, SE7 8QG.

STIGMELLA TILIAE (FREY) IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE. — During 1976, whilst collecting at Bartlow in Cambridgeshire, I found *Stigmella tiliae* larvae in tenanted mines on lime, thus revealing a considerable extension of the known range of the species. Col. Emmet has subsequently found the same species just over the county boundary in North Essex. Unfortunately, it was not seen in either place in 1977, and it remains to be seen whether it will again reveal itself in 1978.

The two localities are on opposite sides of a disused railway line (possibly the original source of the introduction of the species) and are also the site for *Etainia sericopeza* (see *Ent. Rec. J. Var.*, **89**: 257-264). It would probably be fruitful if entomologists paid more attention to such sites as sources of lesser known species, many of whose distributions may well be more extensive than is at present realised. — P. J. JOHNSON, 7 Haverhill Road, Horseheath, Cambridge, CB1 6QR, 1.ii.1978.